Far North Coast Bromeliad Study Group N.S.W.

Study Group meets the third Thursday of each month

Next meeting January 17th 2019 at 11 a.m.

Venue: PineGrove Bromeliad Nursery

114 Pine Street Wardell 2477

Phone (02) 6683 4188

Discussion: December 2018

Christmas Party

and

Trophy Presentation

Editorial Team:
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Helen Clewett
Les Higgins

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Meeting 15th November 2018

The meeting was opened at approximately 11.00 am
The 16 members present were welcomed and one visitor
Three apologies were received.

General Business

Today is the tenth anniversary of seventeen people coming together to create FNCBSG. Happy Birthday! Marie is a founding member and only serious illness prevents her attendance today. Trish is in Lismore Base Hospital and sent her apologies for non-attendance. It is regrettable to have both Marie and Trish absent from today's meeting.

John introduced today's visitor Drew to the Group, he was made welcome and we all hope to see him again.

Ross thanked Les for providing a large slim line TV for the Group, we certainly hope to make a lot of use of it. Ted gave to the Group a lap top just in case the connection problems we were experiencing previously were Ross' computer. Fortunately it was only a cabling issue that was easily resolved, thank you Ted.

There was applause following Ross reading an e-mail from North Fremantle appreciating the Newsletter article on Plant House Design, Location and Utilization. Many hours of thought are required to produce an article and it will be extensively revised. These efforts are rarely acknowledged. Thank you Kim, your appreciation is welcomed.

The answer to John's *Ananas* 'Paradise Pompom' guessing competition last month was 66. The closest guess was Trish at 75. Some guesses were more than double the correct number. Thank you John!

Chores for the Month

Hard Scales, Soft Scales and Mealy Bug are active. Hard scale produces no honey dew therefore they are ignored by ants. Mealy bugs and soft scale are nurtured by ants. Extermination requires several applications of a systemic insecticide such as Conguard™. No matter how conscientiously the first spray is applied there are survivors and there are immune resting eggs. Three sprays three weeks apart is minimum practice. For Fly Speck Hard Scale annihilation, the best time is the spring and autumn emergence of larvae.

Female Soft Scale, Hard Scale and all types of Mealy Bug are wingless. Mealy Bug eggs are immune to pesticides by using the female's dead body as a cocoon or within a waterproof sac. Scale eggs are usually protected under the female's dead body. Reliable destruction of resting eggs only occurs as the larvae emerge and that can be months away.

Members attending the meeting were asked what chores they had been doing during the past month. The answers were interesting and varied, they included:
Replacing shade cloth and adding cloth of greater density.
Adding a topper - a second layer of shade cloth to protect plants from the sun.
Re-potting and fertilising.
Gloria suggested as the weather is getting warmer now is the time to establish Vriesea cuttings/pups.
Moving plants to covered areas for protection from the sun.

Show, Tell and Ask!

Ted reports that his sooty mould problem (not on Bromeliads) has disappeared with one application of organic oil. Sooty mould is an effect not a problem. Unless the troublesome insects: aphids, soft scale and mealy bug are totally exterminated the mould will always return.

Discussion included the use of oils as pesticides. Smothering scale insects with oil has been an obsolete technique for seventy years and is the most damaging of all pesticides used on Bromeliads. Oil damages tricomes and stomates. Respite from insects is brief as there are always survivors and resting eggs to initiate reinfestation. The modern plant safe pesticide technique is to destroy the pest's nervous system. The insect's nervous system is explained on page 13 of 2018 FNCBSG August Newsletter and FNCBSG September Newsletter, page 3.

Questions were again asked about Grex. The seedling group is the Grex regardless of physical shape or flower colour. *Vriesea* 'PineGrove Candles' was used as an example of a grex with a colour descriptor following, resulting from cross pollination of hybrids. The word Grex is Bromeliad language and comparable to gregarious (in clusters) common in other plant disciplines.

As usual Les found the Decorative Display depressing and he was not alone in a dejected state. Of this month's several exhibits only one conformed to the rules and Les said of the remainder: "They are neither decorative nor artistic". Another member is known to have concurred with that opinion.

Gloria had a Hohenbergia hybrid she was wondering if anybody knew if it had been named yet. A very attractive plant which appeared to possibly have *Hohenbergia leopoldo-horstii* as one of the parents. It was suggested to Gloria to either refer back to the hybridiser or check the BCR "What's New" section to see if it is a recent registration.

Sue asked for an explanation of why her *Neoregelia* 'Bird Rock' had produced three long skinny offsets: One thing needed is an increase in light intensity. A plant grown in shade will stretch for more light. Move the plant into brighter light and the new growth should be of better conformation. Another possible cause is excessive fertilizer, sometimes a little starvation is a good thing.

Sue asked why is *Aechmea* 'MEND' in upper case in last months Newsletter ? The BCR informs us the name is derived from:

M - Mildred **M**erkel,
E - Edward **E**nsign who sowed the seed,
N - Julian **N**ally who gave the seed to Ensign
D - in memory of Ralph **D**avis

Sue had a Tillandsia on the table tagged as *Till. crista-gallii*.
Refer: FNCBSG September 2015 *Tillandsia* 'Chooks' article on page 7, or the Bromeliads in Australia web site: bromeliad.org.au and go to 'Detective Derek'.

There was conversation about male and female flowers with particular interest in *Aechmea mariae-reginae.* The male inflorescence is generally long and slender, each flower only has six anthers, the pollen bearing part of a flower, no stigma. The female inflorescence is usually short and round, the flowers have only a stigma, the female portion of a flower which receives the pollen. Plants having their reproductive parts on separate plants is referred to as dioecious. Most Bromeliads have perfect flowers having both male and female parts. Apart from *Aechmea mariae-reginae*, Androlepis, some Catopsis and Hectia species are dioecious. Cryptanthus are polygamous, often having perfect and imperfect flowers on the same plant. So look a little closer to see if it's a boy or a girl.

Kay had a well grown *Tillandsia streptophylla* without roots just sitting on top of potting mix. John admitted that his attractive *Tillandsia fasciculata* was without roots and only the previous day had fallen from the pot. (photos pgs. 8 and 9) Rootless Tillandsias are not uncommon, when the substrate is right and the atmospheric conditions and temperature are suitable Tillandsias have the potential to make rapid and impressive roots.

There was a golden oldie on the table this month that had an erroneous tag of *Neoregelia carolinae durispina* on it, it's now corrected to *Neo*. 'Durispina'.

John showed a *Tillandsia secunda* in full bloom explaining that it has a very poor root system but pups quite readily along the flower spike as it is viviparous. It is native to Ecuador growing on dry rocky slopes at around 2100 mtrs alt. Ross mentioned he saw *Till. secunda* growing in an area with *Till. tectorum, latifolia, caerulea, lymanii* ?*, mima* and *disticha* when travelling around Ecuador in 2015.

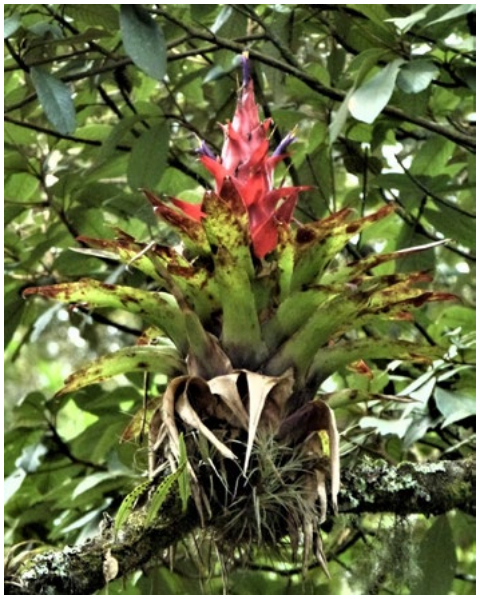
Immediately after lunch Ross was able to use the TV and his lap top to give a most rewarding half hour slide show. The photos were taken during his recent trip in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico organised by Jeff Chemnick and Pam Koide Hyatt. He told of how well organised the tour was and of seeing every plant and more on the supplied itinerary.

Tillandsia mitlaensis

Tillandsia macdougallii

Tillandsia bourgaei

Tillandsia circinnatoides



Tillandsia imperialis

Tillandsia laui

Tillandsia kalmbacheri

Tillandsia violacea

Tillandsia atroviridipetala

Catopsis subulata

Tillandsia streptophylla

Hectia lanata

Tillandsia capitata

Tillandsia lucida

Pitcairnia imbricata

Guzmania sanguinea
1st Open John Crawford

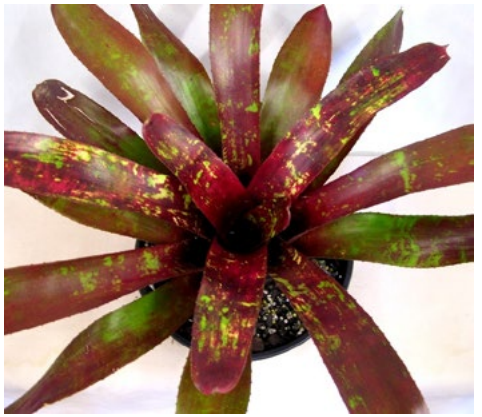
Sincoraea mucugensis
1st Novice and Judges Choice
Sue Mackay-Davidson

Tillandsia streptophylla
1st Tillandsioideae Kay Daniels

'Bowl of Broms'
1st Decorative Helen Clewett

Neoregelia 'Heart Music'
shown by Keryn Simpson

Neoregelia 'Durispina'
shown by Dave Boudier



Neoregelia 'Red River'
shown by Steve Davidson

Aechmea 'Rodco Inverta'
shown by Michelle Hartwell

Tillandsia fasciculata
shown by John Crawford

Photos by: Ross Little

Tillandsia ionantha
Gary McAteer

Tillandsia Christmas Tree
Helen Clewett

Tillandsia cristagallii
Sue Mackay-Davidson

Bromeliads Used as Adornments

by Ross Little 2018

Since joining the Bromeliad Society International in the mid 1990s I have read many articles about Bromeliads being used in Christmas nativity scenes and for other decorative purposes. I was lucky enough to be travelling through Costa Rica in December of 2016 and stayed at a B&B where the children had put together a nativity scene. In it was a small Tillandsia embellishing the roof crest of a barn with *Till. usneoides* being used to represent bedding in a manger, with Joseph standing looking over Mary as she prayed.

On a trip through Mexico in 2018 we encountered *Tillandsia eizii,* all in full bloom being used as adornments on roadside crosses and also on a cross in a church yard.

Whilst searching for Bromeliads in a reserve we not only found *Tillandsia ponderosa* but saw Bromeliads used to form an arch over some crosses. On further inspection the plants used appeared to be *Tillandsia guatemalensis* with their root bases removed, placing the plant vases inside each other they formed a chain. Each chain meeting at the top to form the arch.

We did see both of these Tillandsia species growing in habitat. However one wonders if this is a sustainable practice given that *Tillandsia eizii* is monocarpic, meaning it doesn't produce pups so must be grown from seed, a slow process.

A beautiful high altitude Tillandsia difficult for us to grow in our hot, humid climate, rare.

Tillandsias at Christmas in Mexico

by Sue Gardner

The beauty of Bromeliads has intercultural appeal. Although the majority of the members of the Bromeliad Society, Inc. live in the temperate parts of the world, or are of European ancestry, appreciation of the beauty of these epiphytes cuts across cultural boundaries. The use of the most colorful of these species as decoration by indigenous people of tropical America has been previously noted. Andre discovered *Guzmania sanguinea* being used to adorn a rustic cross in Colombia in 1876, and subsequently described it as a new species. In the rural regions of Mexico Tillandsias are often found decorating shrines and churches. Fritz Kubisch has shown slides to several Bromeliad Societies of *Tillandsia prodigiosa* hanging in masses from the ceiling of a church near Oaxaca. It is not unusual to see flowering Tillandsias for sale in village markets or in fruit stands along the roadsides in various parts of Mexico. *Tillandsia imperialis* is another favorite for decoration, especially at Christmas time.

One of the most spectacular occasions where we have witnessed flowering Bromeliads being collected by the Mexicans, was Christmas week in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, in 1979. During a one week stay there we watched women and children from one of the local groups of indians that is descended from the ancient Maya, as they carried large sheaves of flowering *Till. guatemalensis* and *Till. ponderosa* to market. Walking barefoot in the chill and fog of early morning in the 7,000 ft. + elevation, these small people formed an informal parade as they made their daily trek down from the wooded mountainsides into the village. During a single Christmas season, literally thousands of flowering Tillandsias make their way to market in this region alone.

One can imagine that in pre-Columbian, pre-christian times other occasions were found for the use of these spectacular plants by the local people. Massive collections such as these may have occurred for hundreds, perhaps even thousands of years.

Photos taken in the area of San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, Christmas week. The taller inflorescences are *T. guatemalensis*, the others are *T. ponderosa.*

Reprinted from: BSI Journal Vol.32, November-December 1982, No.6

Tillandsia latifolia - Two KK Forms Get Proper Names – *at last*.

by Derek Butcher, Oct 2018

Tillandsia 'Angustifolia'

photo by Bruce Dunstan

This plant was imported by me from Karel Knize in Peru in 1978. It was in my first importation. It had *Tillandsia latifolia* var. *angustifolia* on the label but I was never able to verify the species because it did not flower for me! Over the years I have had Tillandsias from Karel which seem to have been wild collected but with fanciful names which I thought was great for my enquiring mind. Anyway, this plant was forever offsetting and many times an offset was given away with the plea to tell me when it flowered. So it was a great surprise when Bruce Dunstan reported his plant was in bud. Alas, it did not actually flower but it was sufficient to identify links with *Tillandsia latifolia.* George Nieuwenhoven reports getting his from Chris Larson so it would seem this plant is struggling on, throughout Australia. Some may even have flowered it and not considered it an important occurrence! Surely it is worth a brag!

Tillandsia 'Angustifolia' is a caulescent plant with the basal leaves drying, it offsets freely and seems to produce a single spike. Diameter of plant is 170 mm. Its length with live leaves is about 350 mm. Actual leaves are some 105 mm long and 18 mm wide at base .

Tillandsia 'Skineri'

A plant with this name was imported in 1984 from Karel Knize (Peru) as stated in his plant list. No further detail was given and it was not until later issues was it linked to *Tillandsia latifolia.* Later issues spelt it as 'Skinneri' but there was no indication as to whom this might be. It grew well under my conditions and produced normal offsets but never flowered. Over time I must have disposed of some of the offsets while getting the recipient to promise to tell me when it flowered. Nothing was reported! In my current downsizing I gave one such offset to Ray Clark in 2017.

Because of the change in conditions or Ray's great husbandry it decided to flower in 2018 together with a pseudo-viviparous offset.

Ray reports:
Plant diameter 350mm
Height 300mm
Leaf blade 165 mm long
Length of flower spike 190 mm before offset.

Latifolia means wide leaves but here the leaves are more narrow than usual and a more apt cultivar name could be 'Skinny'!

There is also the thought as to whether it is linked to *Till. latifolia* or the recently promoted from varietal status *Till. divaricata.*

photos by Ray Clark

It is of interest here that Andrew Flower in New Zealand reports a similar looking plant that he grew from seed in 1991 under KK144 *Tillandsia latifolia* Cieneguilla. In the same seed list we see KK43 for *Tillandsia latifolia* 'Skineri' so we can assume that Karel saw differences.

To qualify for a cultivar name it must be under cultivation and not just sitting in one person's collection. Despite the efforts of Ray Clark no other Tillnutter has admitted ownership of this plant so I was rather loth to register the name. The good news is that Justin Lee is now an owner of said plant so I am going ahead in putting 'Skineri' in the BCR.

Web Links for Checking Correct Identification and Spelling ?

Bromeliad Cultivar Register (BCR): http://registry.bsi.org/
Refer to this site for correct identification and spelling of your hybrid or cultivar.

New Bromeliad Taxon List : http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/bcg/taxonList.php
Refer to this site for latest species name changes and correct spelling.

Bromeliads in Australia (BinA) http://bromeliad.org.au/
Refer to this site for its Photo Index, Club Newsletters, Detective Derek Articles.

Keep these web sites set as desktop icons for quick reference access.

The Year in Review

by Les Higgins 2018

January - 2018 was the proposed date for the Newsletter's cover page to be of a heavier grade paper (Newsletter July 2017 is of thicker paper).

February - saw the shock resignation of Kay and Trish after several years of faithfully recording the minutes of the meeting. Les became the 'stop gap' recorder until a volunteer Minute Secretary is obtained. *We are still waiting!*

March - Ross suggested a flier advertising FNCBSG existence. (Attendance at meetings has declined from in excess of thirty in 2011 to seventeen as average during 2018).

April - a proposal to scrap the Decorative Display was defeated and replaced by a partial rule revision. Overwhelming approval was given for a Tillandsioideae show to be created. There was a request for more shows. Mercifully the suggestion of a monthly rotating show of 'other genera' did not proceed. The proposal restricting members to exhibit in less than every competition and therefore hopefully reduce poor quality was voted down.

May - Revised Decorative Display rules were published in what has become a forlorn attempt at getting the exhibits to conform to rules and improve in quality. Introduced into the Newsletter was Chores for the month.

June - The exhibitors had received May's Newsletter detailing the rule revision. Furthermore every exhibitor had voted for the changes.

July - The Newsletter records that Judge's Critique was approved some time ago but never implemented for fear of causing offence.
When an exhibit is put in a show it is there for constructive criticism!

August - Decorative 1st was a *Dyckia* in a fancy pot. The rule is 90% bromeliad. There was more pot than plant and Zerophytes are poor growers in glazed pots. To be a Study Group more thoughtful presentations are needed and possibly further rule amending.

September - The decorative section 1st award was for Spring Time Bevies. *It was decorative, artistic and floral art*. A *rare quality among what is presented as decorative!*

October - this question was posed: Should Chores for the month be continued? *It needs member/reader contributions.*

November - We had the first slide show and it was really appreciated. The TV combined with a Lap-top can facilitate slide shows that are destined to greatly improve our meetings.

December - is party time. A time for happy reminiscences and applaud for the presentations of **worthy** awards. Lets make 2019 a happy rejuvenation year.

Novice Popular Vote

1st	Sue Mackay-Davidson	*Sincoraea mucugensis*
2nd	Michelle Hartwell	*Aechmea* 'Rodco Inverta'
3rd	Steve Davidson	*Neoregelia* 'Red River'

Open Popular Vote

1st	John Crawford	*Guzmania sanguinea*
2nd	Keryn Simpson	*Neoregelia* 'Heart Music'
3rd	Dave Boudier	*Neoregelia* 'Durispina'

Tillandsioideae

1st	Kay Daniels	*Tillandsia streptophylla*
2nd	John Crawford	*Tillandsia fasciculata*
3rd	Helen Clewett	*Tillandsia schiedeana*
3rd	Steve Davidson	*Tillandsia straminea*
3rd	Keryn Simpson	*Tillandsia bergeri*

Decorative

1st	Helen Clewett	'Bowl of Broms''

Judges Choice

1st	Sue Mackay-Davidson	*Sincoraea mucugensis*

Where do I Find the Dates ?

www.bromeliad.org.au then click "Diary".

Check this site for regular updates of times, dates and addresses of meetings and shows in your area and around the country.